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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Fourteenth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 263rd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 17 January 1995, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. CORTI

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OTHER MATTERS

* Items considered together.

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION (continued)

Initial report of Bolivia (continued) (CEDAW/C/BOL/1 and Add.1)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Ms. Montaño (Bolivia) took a place at the Committee table.

Article 7

2. Ms. GARCIA-PRINCE asked what measures existed to support women's non-governmental organizations and other women's organizations, and to encourage women's participation in politics. She also wished to know whether there had been any increase in the percentage of women occupying decision-making positions in public or legal administration.

3. Ms. ESTRADA CASTILLO wondered whether the law in favour of women's political participation had been put into practice and whether it recognized the various ethnic groups. She would welcome any information regarding political and legal education, especially for the indigenous population, to enable them to make use of the resources made available to them. The report was quite comprehensive regarding theoretical changes in the law, but less so regarding the concrete steps taken to improve the situation.

4. Ms. BERNARD, referring to paragraph 118 of the report, asked whether there were any plans to resume the military training for women and, if so, what steps would be taken to encourage women to pursue military careers. Regarding paragraph 125, she asked whether the number of women occupying ministerial posts had increased since the drafting of the report.

5. Ms. BARE commended the Bolivian Government for having passed a law on political participation which recognized grass-roots organizations. She wondered whether there was any programme to use such organizations to ensure that women's representation was increased in low-level decision-making positions perhaps at the municipal level. She also wondered if there was any programme of civic education to encourage women to use their right to vote, in order to increase their representation in parliament, and whether grass-roots organizations could assist women in obtaining the identity cards which they needed in order to vote.

6. Ms. AOUIJ said that women had traditionally been excluded from political life, except during election periods when the political parties needed their votes; they should organize in order to improve their participation, and ensure better representation in elected positions. Women had an important political and ethical contribution to make, but that required their participation in the political process. She hoped to see, in a future report, details of measures taken to increase that participation.

Article 8

7. Ms. HARTONO asked whether men and women were judged by the same criteria in the diplomatic service and, if they were, whether there were any barriers that prevented women from reaching the highest decision-making positions. For example, she wondered whether a university degree was required; also, was there any rule preventing a husband from joining his wife, or enabling him to oppose his wife's appointment to a post in a foreign country.

Article 9

8. Ms. AOUIJ said that it seemed from the report that there was perfect equality regarding nationality; however, it was not clear whether women had the same rights in terms of transmitting their nationality to their children.

9. Ms. BERNARD, referring to paragraph 132, wondered whether a Bolivian woman had the right to confer Bolivian nationality on her foreign husband.

Article 10

10. Ms. SATO, referring to page 7 of the Bolivian Government's statistical document, welcomed the increase in the proportion of women enrolling in Government literacy courses. However, referring to the statistics for adult illiteracy, she asked why the gap between the sexes (adult males 15 per cent, adult females 95 per cent) was so great, what measures were being taken to reduce it, and whether there were any plans to encourage access by women to programmes of continuing education.

11. Ms. JAVATE DE DIOS inquired about reports of a plan to privatize education, which would seem to imply that the Government would relinquish to the private sector its duty to provide education. That would have very serious implications, particularly for the provision of education to the most marginalized sectors of society such as indigenous women. Regarding the policy of bilingualism, she wondered how, given the policy of exclusively Spanish-language education above the fifth level, the country's other languages and cultures would be accommodated. She would also welcome information regarding the encouragement of women's studies and gender studies at the tertiary level, which she considered necessary if the country was to have sufficient specialized and knowledgeable people in the area of gender concerns.

12. Ms. BUSTELO GARCIA DEL REAL asked whether any difficulties had been encountered due to the apparent contradiction between, on the one hand, the policy of ensuring that educational curricula and teaching materials respected the country's various cultural traditions, and on the other hand, the need to combat sexism and gender stereotypes in education. She also wondered whether there were any provisions for health education, and if so, whether that included programmes such as education for family planning, access to contraception and prevention of AIDS.

Article 11

13. Ms. BERNARD inquired whether the activities of street vendors in the "informal" sector were included in formal economic statistics.

14. Ms. GARCIA-PRINCE requested additional information regarding the Government's policy on employment projects for women, especially the need to overcome various gender barriers. Since indigenous women workers in rural areas worked in the least advanced types of production and were restricted to low-status, low-salary jobs, she wondered what concrete measu